

MISSOURI CONSERVATION *Employee* SHOWCASE



Charlie Wright District Conservationist, Bowling Green

Charlie Wright has been helping people help the land since he started working for NRCS (then the Soil Conservation Service) as a student trainee in Kankakee, Illinois, during the summer of 1968. After receiving a bachelor's degree in agronomy (plant and soil science) with a minor in chemistry from Fort Valley State University in 1971, he accepted full-time employment with the agency as a soil conservationist at Poplar Bluff, Missouri.

Since that time, Wright has seen a lot of change, and he has been a big part of some of it. After a few years working at Springfield, Missouri, Wright moved to Bowling Green in 1974, and became the first African-American to be promoted to district conservationist in Missouri.

"That's something I'm proud of because I went through a lot of stuff that other people didn't have to go through, or it was a little less painful for them, I guess," Wright says.

Another thing he's proud of is his selection by the Bowling Green Times as the 2000 Citizen of the Year. That was a reflection of his involvement in the community, where he also served as pastor of the White Rose Baptist Church.

Wright, who was selected as District Conservationist/Team Leader for Pike and Lincoln counties in 1996, is now pastor of Second Baptist Church in Huntsville. That, and his full-time position with NRCS, leaves little time for hobbies.

"I've been preaching for 23 years, and I've been a pastor for 22 years, so that pretty much takes up most of my time," he says. "Once I retire, I think I'll do a lot of fishing."

As for his career with NRCS, Wright says he has especially enjoyed his time in Pike County because of the diversity of the landscape.

It's been a good experience mainly," he says.